



Bay Ridge Eagle

Peace Action Bay Ridge Wants 'Zero Atomic Bombs'

by Harold Egelin (edit@brooklyneagle.net), published online 05-06-2010

Joins UN March as World Leaders Meet on Nuclear Weapons Reduction

By Harold Egelin
Brooklyn Eagle

As world leaders meet at the United Nations to discuss reducing nuclear weapons stockpiles, peace activists in Bay Ridge and throughout Brooklyn were among thousands of marchers who rallied on Sunday near the UN building to demand "zero atomic bombs."

The march with national and global contingents occurred in connection with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, begun on Monday, to stem the growth of nuclear weapons. The rally centered on the theme "No nukes, no war and fund human needs and protecting the Earth" as part of the "Global Zero" peace campaign.

"This is a wonderful opening we have for nuclear weapons abolition," said Chairwoman Sally Jones of Peace Action New York State at a meeting of Peace Action Bay Ridge and the Interfaith Coalition at the Soul Café at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

Jones cited American leadership, saying, "President Obama recently said, 'The U.S. is going to work for abolition.' We've got to hold him to that promise." She continued, "While former secretary of states such as Henry Kissinger and George Schultz differ politically, they all want zero nuclear weapons."

According to a Pentagon announcement on Monday, the U.S. has 5,113 nuclear weapons; a reduction of 84 percent since 1967 when the U.S. had 31,255.

But grassroots pressure must be used and increased, Jones said, citing the example of the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 outlawing above-ground atomic bomb tests, a campaign pushed by the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy or SANE. It was founded in 1957 and national Peace Action is the organization's successor.

She also mentioned the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty of 1996, not yet in effect. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty dates to 1968 with an ultimate goal of total nuclear disarmament.

The Peace Action Bay Ridge meeting featured a screening of Rick Steves' Iran: Yesterday and Today, a documentary about "the power of people-to-people diplomacy" and the realities of life in Iran.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they are the children of God," said Pastor Robert Emerick welcoming the peace activists along with Vicki McFadyen of Peace Action introducing the program. The Lutheran church is host to the Bay Ridge United Methodist Church congregation which Emerick heads, holding services and activities until its new church building is opened.

On May 15 the Sixth Annual Brooklyn Peace Fair 2010 will be held at Brooklyn College by the Brooklyn for Peace organization. The free event will include speakers, performances, workshops, activities for children, art, dance and information tables.

* * *